

record, as misinformation, half-truths, and distractions fill the airwaves.

Let's be honest. These facts don't matter much to those who are dead set on opposing health insurance reform for partisan reasons. They don't matter to the Republican Senator who said he hopes the effort to fix our broken health care system will be President Obama's "Waterloo." They don't matter to the Republican Senator who said Republicans will oppose the bill regardless of any concessions Democrats make. They don't matter to the Republican Senator who said, "I don't have to read it, or know what's in it. I am going to oppose it anyways." Their strategy is to deny the undeniable fact that families' personal health and pocketbooks are suffering. Their strategy is to defend the indefensible practices of insurance companies that make huge profits on the backs of our seniors and our sick. Their strategy is to ignore polls that clearly and consistently show the American people support a public option and instead argue, without evidence, that they don't.

Republicans make no effort to hide their shortsighted and self-destructive strategy. In fact, Roll Call newspaper today reports that they "have mapped out a strategy to draw out debate" rather than work with us to strengthen the bill. Politico reported last week that Republican consultant Frank Luntz is out with a new memo urging Republicans to fake bipartisanship. You will recall that, back in May, Luntz encouraged Republicans to oppose a health care reform bill before there was a single hearing held to determine what should be in the bill and long before a single bill was even written. Now Luntz says Republicans have more to gain by faking bipartisanship and from complaining about the health care bill than working to improve it. All of us—every single American—stand to lose if that happens. I know Senate Republicans appreciate transparency because their strategy is as transparent as it comes. That strategy is simply to delay, delay, delay. And now the newspaper Roll Call acknowledges that.

At the same time, I couldn't help but notice that while Senate Republicans demand transparency, their own plan is being drafted, obviously, in secret—if, in fact, there is one. We don't know how much their bill will cost—the Republican bill—if there is one. We don't know whom it will help, if anybody, or how it will keep insurance companies from abusing Americans. They won't tell us how their plan will lower your health care bills so you don't have to choose between medication and your mortgage. So I can only conclude one of two things: Either the Senate Republicans are drafting a bill in secret or their proposal simply doesn't exist and the Republicans have no solutions to one of the greatest and most urgent challenges of our time—health insurance reform. Whichever it is should concern the American people greatly.

I will acknowledge there is one thing that won't be in their bill secretly or in a transparent fashion, and that is to repeal the McCarran-Ferguson Act that exempts insurance companies from antitrust laws. The insurance companies love that because they can take advantage of the American people, as they have since 1945, since that act became law.

It is increasingly clear to the American people who is trying to help them. It is clear who is reaching across the aisle and negotiating in good faith and compromising where necessary.

Mr. President, we want to work with the Republicans, but how can you work with a party that says that they hope President Obama fails and that this is his Waterloo? It doesn't matter what is in the bill, they will oppose it. Again, today, we heard from Roll Call that their only strategy is to delay. I hope that will change and they will work with us to come up with some ideas on how they can improve health insurance. Let's get the bill on the floor and start debating it.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today, following the remarks of the two leaders, there will be a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each. At 4 p.m., the Senate will resume consideration of the Unemployment Benefits Extension Act, with the time until 5 p.m. equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees. At 5 p.m., the Senate will proceed to a cloture vote on the Reid-Baucus substitute amendment.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel will address a joint meeting of Congress tomorrow at 10:30 a.m. Senators should begin to gather in the Chamber at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning so they can leave at 10:10 a.m. to proceed to the House of Representatives.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The minority leader is recognized.

HEALTH CARE WEEK XVI DAY I

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, for months, the American people have been sending us a clear message about what they want to see in health care reform. They want practical, common-sense reforms that drive down the cost of care, improve access, and create more choices. What they are getting instead from Congress are higher premiums, higher taxes, Medicare cuts, and more government control over their health care decisions.

They are getting the same old big-government solutions to problems that call for creative, modern-day solutions.

Quite simply, there seems to be a disconnect between the American people

and Democrat leaders in Congress. And nowhere is that disconnect more apparent than in the 2,000-page bureaucratic monstrosity of a bill that House Democrats dropped on the American people last week.

At its core, this bill is very similar to what we have already seen in the Senate—a trillion-dollar government experiment that raises taxes, raises premiums, slashes Medicare, and leads to unprecedented government control over the health care decisions of Americans. That is the foundation, the starting-off point. It doesn't get any better from there.

Let's start with the pricetag. At a time of unprecedented government spending and a staggering \$12 trillion debt, the Democrat health care bill asks taxpayers to pony up at least another trillion dollars. To get some sense of the size of that figure, consider the fact that this bill would cost more than \$2 million per word. And believe it or not, that is a conservative estimate.

Once fully implemented, the bill will spend \$2.3 trillion. And this doesn't even account for the \$250 billion that is needed to prevent a cut in reimbursements to doctors who treat Medicare patients. While this so-called "Doc Fix" is no longer in the bill, we saw last month how Democrats in both the House and Senate plan to pay for it. They want to put this \$250 billion on the government credit card and then claim their plans don't add to the deficit.

Well, Americans aren't buying it.

The bill would also hit already-struggling States by imposing a crippling, 10-year, \$34 billion expansion of Medicaid. And it fails to meet the key test that Americans had set for reform, which was to control costs. Indeed, contrary to early promises by the administration about the need to control costs, this bill would actually increase long-term Federal health care spending.

The health care choices that Americans currently enjoy would also be limited under this bill, and the government's role would increase dramatically. If you don't want to buy insurance, too bad: under this bill, the government forces you either to buy insurance or pay a new 2.5-percent tax. Under this bill, the government would also tell you what kind of insurance you can have by dictating the benefits you receive. If a politician in Washington doesn't approve of your current health care plan, you may be forced to give it up. Ironically, the person who would dictate your benefits would go by the title of the Health Choices Commissioner only in Washington, Mr. President.

Notably, this bill no longer includes language from earlier draft legislation stating that essential benefits coverage should not lead to the rationing of health care. Language preventing rationing is out. We can only conclude from the exclusion of this language that the bill writers have opened the